

## **National City General Plan Update Community SWOT Questionnaire and Input Received at Workshops**

One of the first steps in preparing a General Plan Update is to obtain an understanding of how community members currently perceive the city and what they want to change about it. In order to obtain this information, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) questionnaire was developed to identify what people currently like and dislike about their neighborhood and the city as well as their perceptions of future opportunities and threats. A SWOT is a tool for developing a preferred future. The goal is to build on existing strengths, recognize and correct weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities, and minimize threats to implementing positive changes. The questionnaire is not a scientific survey. It is meant to provide us with a general sense of the issues that the community wants to address within the General Plan.

### **Core Questions:**

The SWOT contained eight basic questions:

#### Strengths:

What do you like best about your neighborhood?

What do you like best about National City?

#### Weaknesses:

What do you like least about your neighborhood?

What do you like least about National City?

#### Opportunities:

How could your neighborhood be improved?

How could National City be improved?

#### Threats:

What could stand in the way of improving your neighborhood?

What could stand in the way of improving National City?

### **Distribution to the Public:**

The open-ended SWOT questionnaire was first released to the public for input on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the Neighborhood Council Breakfast. An online version of the questionnaire was posted on the City's website at the same time and availability of the online questionnaire was announced at the November 14<sup>th</sup> Council Breakfast. In addition, a press release announcing the availability of the questionnaire was sent out and an advertisement about the questionnaire was published in the San Diego Reader. The SWOT questionnaire was also distributed to business organizations such as the Port Tenants Association, Mile of Cars, and the Chamber of Commerce.

A total of 85 open-ended questionnaires were received (60 of these were completed at the NHC breakfast or delivered to the City at a later date and 25 were completed online).

Based on input received from the first open-ended questionnaire, a second SWOT questionnaire was developed in a multiple choice format with the ability to also provide open-ended responses. It was released to the public at the February community workshops and an online version of the questionnaire was posted on the City's website. Again, a press release announcing the availability of the questionnaire was sent out.

A total of 53 multiple-choice questionnaires were received (25 were completed at the workshops and 28 were completed online).

### **Results:**

The attached handouts provide the results of the questionnaires. All of the original responses have been provided in addition to a summarized version in which recurring themes/topics were collated into categories to get a sense of the most popular responses. Combined results from both the open-ended questionnaire as well as the responses received from the multiple-choice questionnaire are summarized in the "National City General Plan Update Combined Results from All SWOT Questionnaires" handout. They have been sorted in descending order from the most popular responses to least. There were many similarities between the responses for neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

Most common strengths identified include:

- Convenient location/easy access to freeways
- Neighbors
- Quaint/small town feel
- Diversity
- Sense of community

Most common weaknesses identified include:

- Crime, gang activity, graffiti
- Lack of residential and business property maintenance
- Lack of grocery stores
- Busy streets/people driving too fast
- Lack of entertainment, nightlife, shopping, social opportunities

Most common opportunities identified include:

- Increase lighting
- Stronger code enforcement
- Street/infrastructure improvements
- Empower and engage youth
- Increase arts, culture, education facilities
- Increase security/police presence

Most common threats identified include:

- Lack of money/funding for improvements
- The city's bad reputation/image

- Lack of resources to upkeep properties
- Current economic conditions
- Uncooperative public/fear of change

**Input from February Community Workshops:**

Three community workshops were held in February. The first was on February 3<sup>rd</sup> at the El Toyon Recreation Center, the second was on February 4<sup>th</sup> at Camacho Gym, and the third was on February 6<sup>th</sup> at the MLK building. At these workshops, school and park sketches were presented to the public along with the draft land use and zoning maps and other exhibits identifying proposed General Plan ideas. The vision was also provided as a handout for review. The community was encouraged to provide comments and suggestions and note cards were provided to fill out at these meetings. The “Comment Cards Received at the February Community Workshops” handout identifies the input that was received at these workshops. A total of 60 comment cards were received.